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# **News Release**

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## **Individuals indicted for methamphetamine possession, distribution in northern Minnesota**

The possession and distribution of the highly dangerous and addictive drug methamphetamine is a growing concern among the law enforcement community, but steps are under way to lessen that concern.

Several people were charged in separate indictments last month by federal grand juries on various methamphetamine-related charges involving northern Minnesota.

On Oct. 10, eight people were indicted in Minneapolis with one count of conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute methamphetamine. They are: Erik Lee Rekonen, 26, Virginia; John Francis Hasty, 32, Mountain Iron; Derek Joseph Carlson, 27, Gilbert; Nicholas Michael Mancini, 23, Duluth; Travis John Hanson, 27, unknown address; Corey Lee Nelson-Hughes, 22, Duluth; Lizabeth Ann Skarja, 26, Ely; and Darren Charles Roivanen, 41, Hibbing.

Hasty was also charged with one count of possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, and Skarja was also charged with one count of possession with intent to distribute. A ninth defendant, Clayton John Celley, 29, Virginia, has pleaded guilty to the conspiracy count and is awaiting sentencing.

The indictment alleges that from 2004 through Oct. 1 2007, the eight knowingly and intentionally conspired to distribute and possess with intent to distribute 500 or more grams of methamphetamine. The indictment also alleges that on Jan. 22, 2007, Hasty knowingly possessed a .22-caliber Browning rifle, a 7.62-millimeter rifle, and three semi-automatic handguns. Hasty was convicted of fifth-degree possession of a controlled substance in 2001 in Douglas County, and again in 2002 in Pine County.

If convicted on the conspiracy count, the eight each face a potential maximum penalty of life in prison. All sentences are determined by a federal district court judge.

This case is the result of an investigation by the Drug Enforcement Agency, the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, the Boundary Waters Drug Task Force and the police

departments of Duluth, Hibbing and Virginia. It is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Andrew R. Winter.

In a separate indictment, three people were charged on Oct. 1 in Minneapolis with methamphetamine distribution offenses. Chad Jeffrey Daly, 26, Duluth, was charged with one count of possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine and one count of possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime. Marie Denise Bernier, 46, St. Paul, and Karen Teresa Creevy, 39, Little Canada, were both charged with one count of distribution of methamphetamine.

The indictment alleges that on June 12, 2007, Daly did knowingly and intentionally possess with intent to distribute 50 or more grams of methamphetamine, as well as knowingly possess a Smith and Wesson .40-caliber handgun.

On June 31, 2007, the indictment alleges that Bernier and Creevy did knowingly and intentionally distribute 50 or more grams of methamphetamine.

If convicted, Daly faces a potential maximum penalty of 45 years in prison on both counts. Bernier and Creevy each face a potential maximum penalty of 40 years in prison. All sentences are determined by a federal district court judge.

This case is the result of an investigation by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, the Duluth Police Department and the Lake Superior Drug and Gang Task Force. It is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Steven L. Schleicher.

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An indictment is a determination by a grand jury that there is probable cause to believe that offenses have been committed by the defendant. The defendant, of course, is presumed innocent until he or she pleads guilty or is proven guilty at trial.